

SCOTTSDALE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION REPORT



To: Paths & Trails Subcommittee
From: Susan Conklu, Senior Transportation Planner
Subject: Cactus Path: 124th Street to 128th Street
Meeting Date: May 28, 2014

ITEM IN BRIEF

Action:

Recommendation

Purpose:

Provide information on the planned Cactus Path connection from 124th Street to 128th Street. Staff requests a recommendation from the Paths & Trails Subcommittee for the presence, location, and surface type.

Background:

The proposed path is 0.5-mile long and will connect residential homes to Anasazi Elementary School. Currently, the only existing route for pedestrians and bicyclists to reach the school is along 128th Street, Via Linda, and 124th Street for approximately 1.4-miles. The majority of students do not walk to school, including those who live within walking distance. In many elementary schools, the students travel to school by walking, bicycling, skating, or using scooters. Both the Transportation Department and the Scottsdale Unified School District believe more students and parents will walk to school with a more direct and improved surface path.

This path is included in the planned network of the 2008 Transportation Master Plan (TMP). Goals and Objectives from the Pedestrian Element include safe, direct connectivity, Safe Routes to School, and Americans with Disabilities Act requirements which this path will provide. The Bicycle Element of the TMP discusses Priority Connections for the off-street system including several fully circulating primary corridors such as the Indian Bend Wash Path, with "spur routes," such as the Cactus path, connecting the primary loops into neighborhoods and other districts. Spur route priorities include:

- Improving access within a neighborhood to a school
- Improving access within a neighborhood to a park
- Connecting a school or park to the circulating system

A public open house was held May 12, 2014 at Anasazi Elementary School to discuss circulation in the neighborhood, including improvements on Cactus Road, 128th Street, 124th Street, and Via Linda. Twenty people signed in, and eleven comments were received regarding the various improvements. The comments specific to the Cactus path include:

- Opposition to the connection in general
- A preference for unpaved surface instead of concrete
- Discomfort with the close proximity to adjacent homes
- Noise and litter concerns

We will meet with the school, parents, and neighbors to continue to discuss the path and general circulation in the neighborhood.

Key Considerations:

The Safe Routes to School program recommends separating students who walk and bike to school from personal vehicles and buses to minimize conflicts during busy drop-off and pick-up times. With as many as 800 students in elementary schools, this separation of vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists is important for safety and comfort. In many schools, providing better access has encouraged more students to walk and bike to school.

Transportation representatives are exploring opportunities to pair this project with others in the vicinity including proposed Ringtail Trail improvements with the McDowell Sonoran Preserve on 128th Street. There is currently funding available during fiscal year 2014-2015 to design and construct the improvement. Final alignment of the Cactus path will depend on whether concrete or stabilized decomposed granite is used. Decomposed granite is acceptable for pedestrians, mountain bicyclists, and equestrians. Typical school users will include inline skates, skateboards, scooters, and strollers which are not well suited for decomposed granite.

Attachments:

Attachment 1 Public Comments

Attachment 2 Area Map

Comments received as of May 22, 2014

Public Comments.
Proposed Transportation & Circulations Improvements
Via Linda, 124 – 128th streets

Comments received as of May 14, 2014

1. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Improved path from 124 – 128th – why! We have lived with Cactus backing to our backyard for over 25 years. Not one child has ever been seen walking “along” Cactus from communities to the east towards Anasazi, that is why the bus service is provided, people walk along Cactus and Ringtail Trail path especially in the evening or morning with dogs particularly at times where there is little vehicle traffic. No improved path is needed.

Sidewalk on west side of 128th – again why; sidewalk already on eastside, can’t children cross at Via Linda to east side – sounds like Scottsdale wants to reduce liability issue. We see people running, walking dogs and riding bikes on east side off the sidewalk; can’t force people onto sidewalks even if provided.

Roundabout at 128th to improve traffic – where were Scottsdale planners and school board when three schools were planned within such short distances with traffic flowing through one intersection. Different solutions than roundabout can be proposed to eliminate traffic congestion – staggered school start/stop times – bus exiting from middle school behind high school to 124th Street avoiding altogether Via Linda. Think about children crossing Via Linda going north from middle school (with roundabout).

2. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Adding more parking on 128th Street will increase traffic on an already busy residential street.

For sidewalk along Cactus connecting 124th & 128th better to be pressed dirt (like the horse trail) rather than concrete.

We live here because we want to be close to the Preserve. We don’t want to keep adding more concrete.

Is putting a concrete sidewalk leading to opening Cactus between 124th & 128th? We don’t want the road to go through.

Comments received as of May 22, 2014

3. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

- 128th/Via Linda – roundabout
 - a. Would like to see beautification along Via Linda when you install roundabout
 - b. 'Roundabouts' – okay for me
- 128th improvements (above Cactus)
 - a. Sidewalk – okay
 - b. Formal parking – okay
- Trail between 128th to 124th
 - a. Want packed dirt/rock for trail surface versus cement (no cement)
 - b. Use the existing pathway
- Via Linda improvements:
 - a. Would like 'bike lanes' both east & west bound
 - b. Would like beautification improvements for Via Linda

4. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

RE: Walkway on Cactus from 128th alongside residences in Sonoran Heights.

Potential problem if sidewalk in concrete as it invites kids to use sidewalk for skateboarding and small motor bikes. The noise would totally destroy the quiet serenity of the home environment. Also, such a circumstance would be a detriment to the marketability of those homes alongside Cactus.

5. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

I do not want a cement path along Cactus from 128th to Anasazi. It would greatly increase the amount of traffic for the homes along the Cactus alignment.

*Great to have a roundabout @ 128th & Via Linda.

*Great to have a roundabout @ 124th & Cactus.

Comments received as of May 22, 2014

6.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

- For sidewalk from 128th – 124th – give some distance north of home – backyards for privacy.
- Do roundabouts with taste – similar to the one on Northsight.
- I roundly approve and support all projects presented.

7.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

I like every part of this proposed project.

One concern – align the sidewalk on Cactus between 128 and 124 on the north side of Cactus, away from the homes to the south of Cactus.

Thank you for your efforts to meet with us.

8.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

I oppose any roundabouts on any street let alone a busy street like Via Linda @ 124 & 128 streets. They hinder traffic and do not do anything but add confusion & traffic snarls where ever they are placed. With kids driving cars all day long it will be a mess.

The parking area along 128th Street north of Cactus on the west side is already large enough. Any expansion will invite nighttime parties & noise to those of us who face 128th Street.

A sidewalk along 128th Street would be fine but not necessary.

I have lived at 128th Street north of Cactus and have never experience any parking, walking or traffic loads. It is not broken so it does not need fixed. Besides north of Cactus on the west side is Preserve and should not be expanded.

Comments received as of May 22, 2014

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

May 8, 2014

City of Scottsdale
Transportation Department/Traffic Engineer
7447 East Indian School Rd.
Scottsdale, AZ 85251

Re: Neighborhood Open House Regarding Proposed Changes to 128th Street North of Via Linda

To Whom It May Concern,

The purpose of my letter is to provide input for a neighborhood open house, which I am unable to attend, being held on Monday, May 12, 2014 at Anasazi Elementary School regarding proposed changes to 128th Street North of Via Linda. Being a resident of 12922 East Cibola Drive, I travel this road 2-4 times a day and therefore feel I understand traffic issues at this location very well. It is my understanding, via word of mouth, that the proposed changes to 128th Street include, 1) more parking for the trailhead located at the North terminus; 2) removing some or all of the No Parking/Stopping/Standing signs; and 3) the installation of a round-a-bout at the intersection with Via Linda. Knowing what I know, I would oppose all three of these changes for the following reasons and would suggest alternates which I have listed at the conclusion of my letter.

First, the installation of more parking for the trailhead is unnecessary. I hike the trail 2-3 times a month and have never encountered a lack of parking at this location. If there is a parking issue at the main trailhead located at the end of 124th Street, it is more appropriate to address this issue at that location given the fact that this is where the visitor's center is located and the fact that there is ample land to increase parking.

Second, the removal of the No Parking/Stopping/Standing signs near Via Linda could increase the risk to middle school students being dropped off or picked up from school. It is my understanding that the installation of these signs was to address this very issue. Parents were parking on both sides of 128th Street for a great distance before and after school causing traffic problems and safety concern for pedestrians. Although the speed limit is posted as 30 mph on 128th Street, it has been my observation that speeds on this road frequently exceed the posted by 10 to 20 mph. 128th Street is a wide road, with no homes affronting, that slopes downward toward Via Linda encouraging higher rates of speed than the posted. Removing the No Parking/Stopping/Standing signs and reinstating parent drop-off and pick-up on 128th Street will only increase the risk of injury to students. If a parent drop-off and pick-up area is needed, I would suggest a better solution would be to install such a facility within the parking lot located just west of the middle school. Given the fact that teachers arrive prior to and leave after the students, there would be little conflict with those parked in this lot. A right turn only in and out

Comments received as of May 22, 2014

City of Scottsdale

May 8, 2014

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of the lot can be added to further facilitate movements into and out of the parent drop-off and pick-up loop within the parking lot. This way, students will be dropped off and picked up within the school grounds and without having to cross busy streets.

Third, the installation of a round-a-bout at the intersection of Via Linda and 128th Street would increase traffic problems at this location. A round-a-bout would cause drivers focus on navigating this unfamiliar traffic control devise without collision and thus decreasing attention to pedestrians, a bad idea in front of a school. Also, the numerous buses that leave the school before and after school would have to navigate a tight 270 degree turn around (or over) the round-a-bout every time they leave the school. If the purpose of a round-a-bout at this location is to slow, or calm, traffic on Via Linda, it seems that a 4-way stop would be a better solution, especially given the crosswalks leading to and from the school and bus traffic that must navigate this intersection. If a 4-way stop is justified at the intersection of Via Linda and 136th Street due the presents of a park on 136th Street, surely a 4-way stop is justified immediately adjacent to the middle school. This would increase safety of pedestrians, increase safety of vehicle turning movements, and slow traffic on Via Linda at this intersection. A 4-way stop would also cost a small fraction of the cost of a round-a-bout.

A greater concern, to me, is the lack of street lighting on Via Linda at the crosswalks leading to and from the schools, especially the one immediately in front of the high school. Via Linda is a 40 MPH road and it is very hard to see pedestrians crossing within the crosswalks at night. It seems to me only a matter of time before someone gets hurt leaving the school grounds at night. This would be money better spent than the installation of a round-a-bout.

In conclusion, I believe the proposed changes to 128th Street address non-issues and feel this money would be better spent in other ways. To this end, I would suggest four alternate charges in this area to address the issues discussed above. 1) the installation of more parking at the main trailhead located at the end of 124th street. 2) the installation of a 4-way stop at the intersection of Via Linda and 128th Street. 3) the installation of a parent drop-off and pick-up loop within the existing parking lot located immediate west of the middle school. And 4) the installation of more, or better, street lighting at all crosswalks immediately adjacent to the middle school and high school grounds.

I appreciate the consideration of my letter and its entry into the public record. Thank you.

CC:

Comments received as of May 22, 2014

Conklu, Susan

From: Kercher, Phillip
Sent: Sunday, May 18, 2014 12:32 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Walter, Holly
Subject: RE: traffic circle at 128th and Via Linda

[REDACTED]

Thanks for your comments. We are at a very preliminary stage for these projects, which is getting feedback from area residents about some transportation concerns that we are aware of in this area. There is no construction timetable. Currently there is a police officer directing traffic at Mountainside Middle School on most school days, and neither our Police Department or the Scottsdale Unified School District think that this is a appropriate use of the officer's time. We will have some more opportunities for public input on the 128th Street and Via Linda intersection before anything is decided.

Phillip Kercher
Transportation
City of Scottsdale
480-312-7645

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, May 18, 2014 11:04 AM
To: Kercher, Phillip
Subject: traffic circle at 128th and Via Linda

Dear Mr. Kercher,

In response to the proposed traffic circle at 128th and Via Linda, we are in opposition. This would not be completed by the beginning of the school year August 6, and the contraction would cause more problems than it would solve. The expense is not worth it. Money would be better spent to have a police officer there morning and afternoon to direct traffic.

[REDACTED]

Comments received as of May 22, 2014

Conklu, Susan

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, May 16, 2014 5:00 PM
To: Walter, Holly
Subject: proposal for 124-128th streets

I am a tax payer of Arizona and full time resident of Scottsdale. I live in Sonoran Heights, across the street from Desert Mt high school. I feel the proposals to ease congestion on Via Linda and north 124th St. are too costly. The hours of congestion are predictable and occur only when school is in session. The proposal to "sidewalk" the trail from 128th to 124th at the north end of my subdivision is ridiculous. This is a nature preserve that attracts attention at designated trail heads....Lost Dog, for instance. Make it more inviting and the noise and litter follow. I would say the same thing about the proposal to enhance the north end of 128th street.

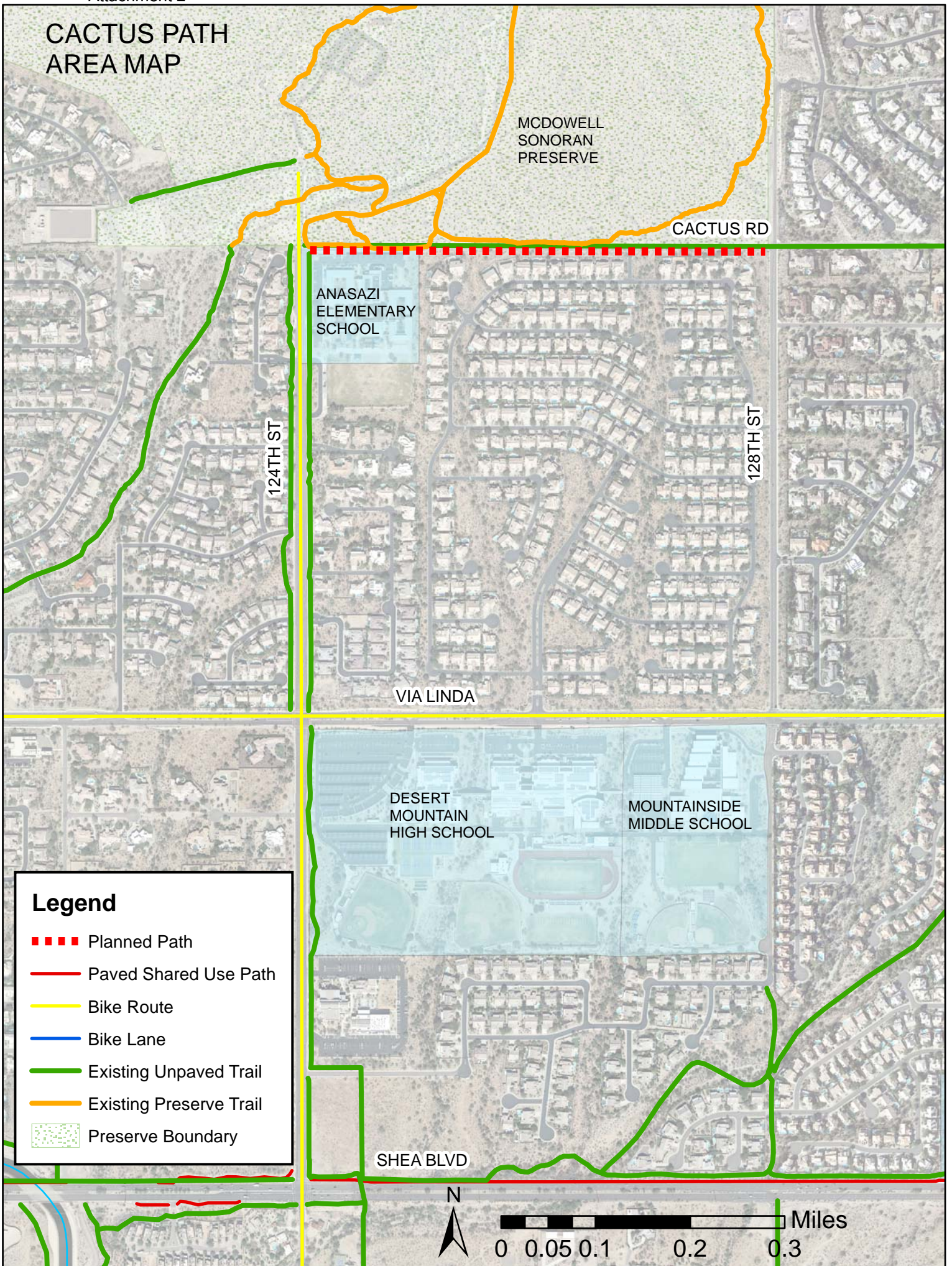
Might i suggest closing the entrance to the high school on Via Linda. Having 2 entrances opposite one another was very poor engineering on the school districts part. The lot in front of the library could be accessed by building a bridge over the wash and connecting the two lots. The middle school buses can be routed to go east to 132nd and then to Shea Blvd. If UPS saves money with no left hand turns then SUSD can learn also. the traffic around Anasazi elemenary school can be routed to the Lost Dog existing roundabout and eliminate the need to put more concrete or blacktop around the preserve

I look forward to the next exchange of information, but not to another OPEN HOUSE.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

CACTUS PATH AREA MAP





Cactus Road Path: 124th to 128th Street

Trails Subcommittee

May 28, 2014

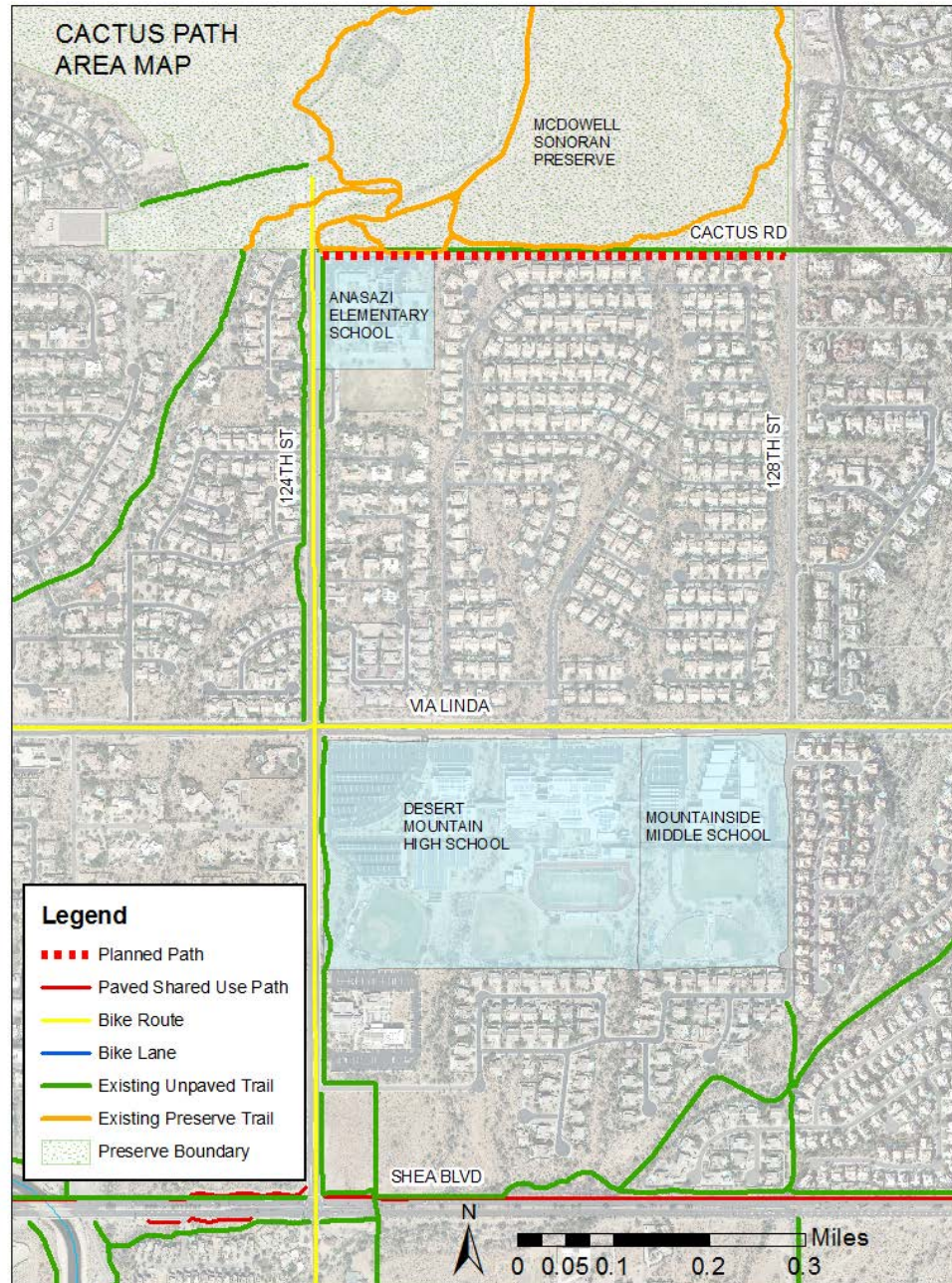


Background

2008 Transportation Master Plan

- Bicycle Element – Planned Tier 3 Path
- Pedestrian Element
 - Priority off-street connections including primary corridors such as the Indian Bend Wash Path
 - “Spur routes” connecting primary loops to neighborhoods and other districts. Such spur route priorities can include:
 - Improving neighborhood access to schools and parks
 - Connecting schools and parks to system

CACTUS PATH AREA MAP



- Existing Route 1.4 miles
- Proposed Path 0.5 mile
- Feeder Routes

Anasazi
Elementary

124th Street

128th Street

Via Linda

- Existing Route
- Proposed Path
- Vehicular Route
- Bus Route

124th Street

128th Street

Existing Conditions

Anasazi Elementary School

- Drop-off and pick-up area
- Existing 1.4-mile route:
 - 128th Street – east side sidewalk
 - Via Linda
 - 124th Street – Mountain View Trail and sidewalk

Via Linda and 128th Street



124th Street & Cactus Road



124th Street south of Cactus Road



124th Street south of Cactus Road



May 12, 2014 Public Open House

- Discussed area circulation:
 - Cactus Path
 - 128th Street, Ringtail Trail (McDowell Sonoran Preserve)
 - Via Linda
 - 124th Street

May 12, 2014 Public Open House

- 20 people signed in and 11 comments were received:
 - Why? No child has ever been seen walking there.
 - Prefer unpaved trail rather than concrete.
 - Use existing [Preserve] trail.
 - Concern about noise from skateboards on concrete.
 - Concerns about proximity to homes – put path or sidewalk farther north from yards.
 - This is a nature preserve that attracts attention at designated trailheads. Make it more inviting and the noise and litter follow.

Next Steps

- Another meeting with school, parents, and neighbors.
- Determine surface and alignment.

Discussion